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Krzysztof SKUBISZEWSKI **POLAND**
(Phonetic: skoobeeZHEHVskee)

Minister of Foreign Affairs
(since 1989)

Addressed as: Mr. Minister

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Krzysztof Skubiszewski will most likely be replaced when a new government is formed. During his tenure, he has struggled to maintain a preeminent role for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in formulating Polish foreign policy against attempts to usurp his authority.

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The Foreign Minister reportedly objected to plans for the expansion of Walesa's presidential office to include counterpart secretariats or departments for each ministry.

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the MFA sometimes is overlooked on policy issues.

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Foreign Policy Priorities

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Skubiszewski has devoted his attention to developing a security relationship with NATO and the West without jeopardizing Poland's relations with the Soviets. He has frequently said that Warsaw is not considering a formal relationship with NATO but has commented favorably on the role the Alliance plays in Europe.

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the Minister invested a good deal of his prestige in bringing about Poland's bilateral treaty with Germany—ratified by the Sejm (lower house) on 19 October 1991. Skubiszewski has lamented the slow progress in negotiations with the Soviets on troop withdrawals;

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the Foreign Minister believes a major impediment to the talks has been the Soviet military's perceived loss of face associated with the withdrawals.

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Skubiszewski has been nominated to succeed UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

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Skubiszewski—who has dismissed most of Poland's Communist-era ambassadors—would take an active role in replacing East European Secretariat employees who were appointed by former Communist regimes.

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Skubiszewski is considered too academic and too independent to take guidance from the Security Council and successfully coordinate and implement UN policy.

Turf Battles

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Skubiszewski reportedly feared that the appointment in January 1991 of Janusz Ziolkowski—Walesa's chief foreign policy adviser and an experienced foreign affairs politician—as state secretary for strategic foreign policy questions signaled the President's desire to play an ever-increasing role in foreign policy. Although the two men were close associates while teaching at Poznan University during the late 1960s,

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During Walesa's state visit to Rome, Ziolkowski

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apparently claimed an order of protocol rank beyond his station. Ziolkowski outlined Poland's foreign policy objectives during a meeting with Pope John Paul II—reportedly at Walesa's request—while Skubiszewski watched silently.

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Lifetime Academic

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Skubiszewski was born on 10 August 1926 into a wealthy and educated Poznan family. He is a graduate of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan. A highly respected professor of international law, he lectured at the University of Geneva in 1961 and at the University of London in 1963.

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Skubiszewski attended Harvard in the late 1950s on a Ford Foundation grant and was awarded an LL.M. In 1964 he reportedly did research at Columbia on the UN General Assembly.

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Skubiszewski is an acknowledged expert in Polish-German relations. During 1981-84 he was a member of Cardinal Jozef Glemp's Social Council on the Polish – West German forum. During the February 1990 Open Skies conference, then Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze consulted him on the issue on two or three occasions.

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A political outsider, Skubiszewski was brought in by the Mazowiecki government to bridge the gap between the old bureaucrats and the new guard. Skubiszewski performed well, and Mazowiecki gave him broad authority over foreign affairs, He was the architect of a highly successful campaign to include Poland in the German reunification process.

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Personal Data

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Skubiszewski has been described as calm and informal during negotiations, given to concise and focused statements. he ably assisted Walesa during a July 1991 visit to NATO Headquarters by providing comprehensive and elegant elaborations of Walesa's sometimes cryptic foreign policy pronouncements. Skubiszewski never raised his voice, was always polite, and apologized "if he was even two minutes late."

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Skubiszewski has written on international organizations, Polish-German border issues, and military law. He speaks fluent Oxford English, and has a good command of French. During the Open Skies conference he spontaneously translated part of his presentation into French. He is not married.

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1 November 1991

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